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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 9 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to bring to your attention the latest provocative attempts to suppress free speech and expression in the occupied part of Cyprus and silence those voices within the Turkish Cypriot community in favour of a solution of the Cyprus problem and peaceful coexistence of the two communities in a reunited Cyprus.

On 5 October 2003, members of the extremist Grey Wolves organization, mainly of Turkish mainland origin, gathered in front of the offices of the Turkish Cypriot daily *Afrika* (formerly *Avrupa*), in occupied Nicosia, extending threats against the newspaper and the lives of its journalists, Sener Levent and Ali Osman. The marchers, carrying banners and Turkish flags, chanted slogans and made the sign of the wolf, while two of the marchers placed a black wreath in front of the offices' door. Speaking in front of *Afrika*'s offices, the leader of the organization, Mr. Hasan Keskin, extended threats by stating: "this warning is the last warning for *Afrika*. If the law does not punish them, the nation will. The punishment of the traitors is certain". Many organizations and press associations in Cyprus and abroad condemned these actions and expressed their support for the newspaper and its reporters.

This incident follows a series of threats and acts of intimidation against those Turkish Cypriots who disagree with Turkey's policy in Cyprus and have the courage to publicly challenge Turkey's military presence on the island and Mr. Denktash's negative approach to the Cyprus problem. It constitutes part of a well-known and long-standing systematic policy of the occupying Power and its subordinate local administration to eliminate any critical point of view coming from the Turkish

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Cypriots who support the idea of a reunited Cyprus that is free of occupation troops and a member of the European Union.

This new incident of repression comes at a time when the Cyprus problem is at a critical juncture. While the voice of the Turkish Cypriot opposition, drastically increased and empowered, advocates the resumption of substantive negotiations for a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem, Mr. Denktash, supported by Ankara, continues to refuse to return to the negotiating table, thus depriving the Turkish Cypriots from participating in accession to the European Union.

The Government of Cyprus strongly condemns these recent provocations in the occupied part of Cyprus and expresses grave concern for the threat against the lives of the two Turkish Cypriots journalists of *Afrika*. In this respect, we appeal to you to exercise your influence upon Turkey in order to exert pressure on Mr. Denktash and to instruct its military and other agents to respect the human rights of the Turkish Cypriots and their fundamental liberties of free expression and speech and cease the harassment of those who dare to express freely their opinions.

It would be very much appreciated if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, under agenda items 117 (a) and (b).

(*Signed*) Andreas D. **Mavroyiannis**